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"A new commandment, I give unto you, That ye love one another,"

SPEECH

OF

HON. E. E. SETTLE,
OF KENTUCKY,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 1893,

ON THE BILL TO REMOVE DISABILITIES OF CONFEDERATES
OF THE LATE WAR.

WASHINGTON.
1893.

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Mr. W. A. Smith

1870

E. J. R. D. M. V.

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The House having under consideration the bill (S. 4574) to remove all disabilities imposed by section 3 of the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution—

Mr. SETTLE said:

Mr. SPEAKER: I think when the permanent RECORD of this day's session is made up it would be incomplete indeed if some Representative from the South, some man who is supposed to be in sympathy with the Southern people in their present and their past relations to the General Government, did not avail himself of the opportunity to respond to the generous sentiments that have been uttered on the floor of the House by the gentleman from Ohio and the gentlemen from Iowa and Wisconsin in the conduct of this bill to-day, for notwithstanding we may all say this is a just bill and ought to have become a law years ago, yet we from the South must agree that it is none the less a generous bill; and Southern Representatives should not hesitate so to declare in their places here, for had we been the victors we might not have been so generous as they.

This bill is but the culmination of the course of events that have been gradually approaching this point for ten or fifteen years past. I have seen it in the present session. I have heard the great battle hymn of the South—"Dixie"—receive as generous applause in Northern capitals as was accorded to the "Star-Spangled Banner" and "Marching Through Georgia." And it came not from Southern sympathizers, but from the generous people of the North, who took that occasion to say, in this way,

to their brethren at the South, "We embrace you and have learned to forget all past differences." [Applause.]

I happened to be at a down-town theater the other evening. In the interval between the acts it has become the custom not to go out, but to remain and hear the orchestra discourse patriotic anthems and airs. After the band had ceased playing some gentleman arose and proposed "Three cheers for McKinley." The vast audience gave them with a will. Then three cheers were proposed for Dewey, the hero of Manila, which were also responded to. And then some gentleman, whom I took to be a military officer of rank, arose in his place, and waving his hand in the air said, "Three cheers for a united country!" Gentlemen, that sentiment caught me; and it caught that vast house. [Applause.]

I thank God that I have lived to see this day. We sometimes thought that the great war between the States was an unmitigated evil, but in the providence of God it, accompanied by other agencies, has proved to be a great blessing. That war was not of chance or of accident. It came as the winds come and as the storms come and as all things else come—in response to the eternal purposes and behests of Him who "holds the wind in His fist and the hearts of men in the hollow of His hand." [Applause.]

The beginning of the war was the acme of that sectional hate which had been growing and increasing in bitterness for thirty years. The North had no love for the South, and the South had no respect for the North. The conflict was irrepressible. The world looked on at the magnificent display of courage and fortitude exhibited through four years of battle and strife, and while one rebel could not, as he thought at the beginning, wipe out five "Yankees," the sequel showed that he could put them to considerable exertion. [Laughter and applause.]

When valor and courage and endurance shall no longer command the praise of men, when tribute shall be denied to those who endured privation without complaint and suffered all manner of sacrifices without murmur, then we might hesitate to unroll the curtain of that past and let its scenes pass in panorama before us. But heaven forbid in this day, when one touch of nature has made us all akin, that I should fear in this presence to

hold up for admiration the prowess of the gallant boys in the trenches and the field, wearing the blue or wearing the gray, who gave to the cause of their country their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. [Applause.]

But the end came at last. These Southern knights went down to their home, and many of them can not be reached by any provision of earthly statute now.

Many of those good knights are dust—
 Their good swords rust,
 Their souls are with the saints, we trust.

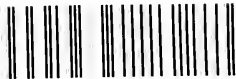
They went down to their desolated homes and despoiled fields, and without complaint they set about the task, the herculean task, of rebuilding those waste places and restoring their ancient splendor. Her sons laid down their arms in good faith, and in the same spirit they laid their hearts upon the altar of their country and took their step to the music of the Union. I do not believe, gentlemen, that the American people were ever so united as they are to-day. The men who stayed at home were the last to forgive, but the men who fought have always been the first to forget. [Applause.]

And now we are hastened to this era of good times by the war in which we find ourselves involved. We shall free Cuba, but we shall do more than that. We shall free ourselves. The greatest of English poets, in speaking of the divine quality of mercy, has said that—

It is twice blest:
 It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

If we shall confer a gracious boon upon the people of that unhappy island, we shall receive a blessing from Heaven, such perhaps as we may not be able to contain. Out of this baptism of fire and blood wherewith we are now being baptized we shall come forth, I doubt not, new men and new women, clean every whit, with sectional hate and sectional bitterness clean gone forever. [Applause.]

That were a consummation devoutly to be wished; that were the summum bonum, the great desideratum; that were well worth all the treasure we may expend and all the blood that may be shed. In the language of the great Kentucky editor, this war has



already forever eliminated the sectional contest. There are thousands of old Confederates who are to-day happy in the thought that before they have been called to join the silent bivouac of the dead, they have seen the North and the South united in battle array beneath the Stars and Stripes.

Flag of the free heart's hope and home!
By angel hands to valor given!
Thy stars have lit the welkin dome.
And all thy hues were born in heaven.

[Applause.]

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